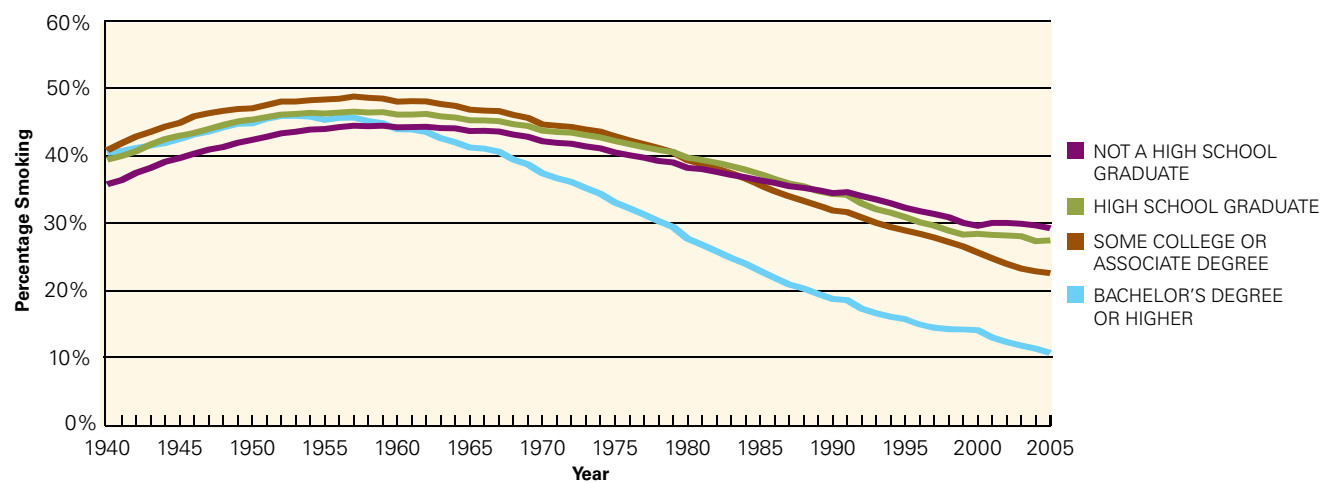


Smoking

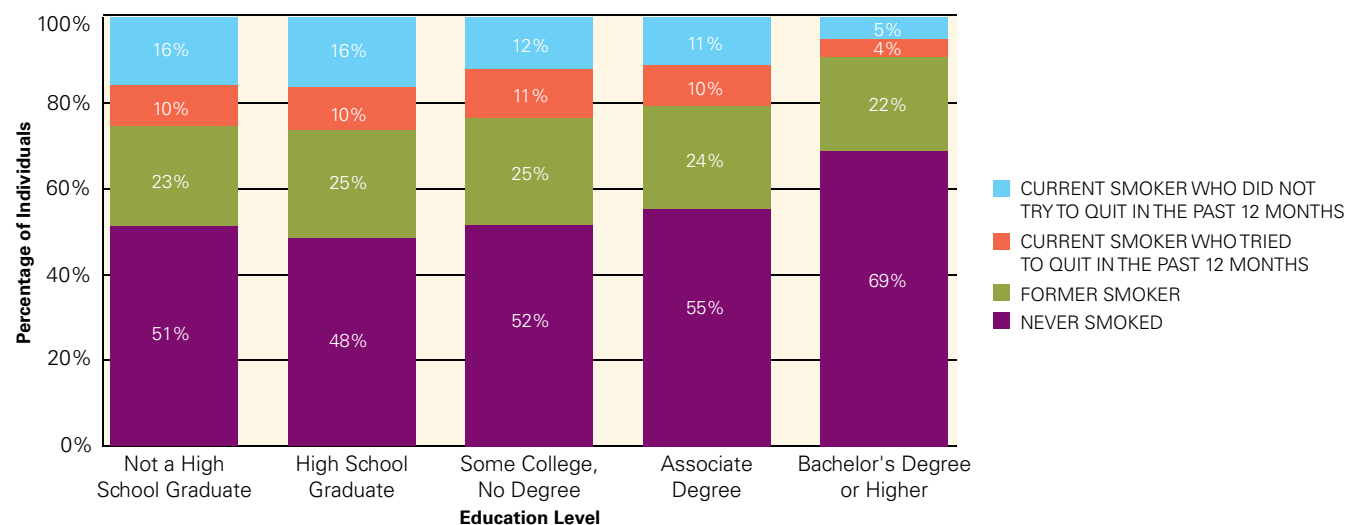
Figure 1.14a: Smoking Rates of Individuals Ages 25 and Older, by Education Level, 1940–2005



Note: Data for 2001–05 are three-year moving averages (i.e., the average of the current year and the two previous years).

Sources: De Walque, 2004; NCHS, *National Health Interview Survey*, various years.

Figure 1.14b: Distribution of Smoking Histories Among Individuals Ages 25 and Older, by Education Level, 2005



Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Sources: NCHS, 2005 *National Health Interview Survey*; calculations by the authors.

Smoking rates among college graduates have been significantly lower than smoking rates among other adults since information about the risks became public.

- Smoking rates in the United States increased in the 1940s, leveled off at about 45 percent in the 1950s, and began a steady decline in the late 1960s. College graduates were at least as likely as others to smoke before the medical consensus on the dangers of smoking became clear.
- By 1970, when information was widespread and clear public warnings mandatory, the smoking rate among college graduates had declined to 37 percent, while 44 percent of high school graduates smoked.
- By 2005, only about 20 percent of adults smoked. Among four-year college graduates, only 9 percent smoked and over half of those had made an effort to stop smoking in the past year (Figure 1.14b).